

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE  
TITLE 9. PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS  
SUBTITLE B. COUNTY PUBLIC BUILDINGS  
CHAPTER 291. GENERAL BUILDING PROVISIONS AFFECTING COUNTIES

Sec. 291.001. PROVIDING AND MAINTAINING COUNTY BUILDINGS.  
The commissioners court of a county shall:

(1) provide, as soon as practicable after a county seat is established or moved, a courthouse and offices for county officers at the county seat;

(2) provide other necessary public buildings; and

(3) maintain the courthouse, offices, and other public buildings.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 291.002. OFFICES AT COUNTY SEAT. The county judge, sheriff, clerks of the district and county courts, county treasurer, tax assessor-collector, county surveyor, and county attorney shall keep their offices at the county seat.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 291.003. CONTROL OF COURTHOUSE. The county sheriff shall have charge and control of the county courthouse, subject to the regulations of the commissioners court.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 291.004. PROVISION OF OFFICES, SUPPLIES, AND COURTROOMS TO CERTAIN JUSTICES OF THE PEACE. (a) If requested by a justice of the peace of a county who handles an average of more than 50 cases a month during the 12 months preceding the date of the request, the commissioners court of the county shall furnish the justice of the peace with suitable office space and necessary telephones, equipment, and supplies. The commissioners court shall furnish the items at the beginning of the first fiscal year after the date the request is made. The items are in addition to the compensation and expenses provided for by Subchapter B, Chapter [152](#).

(b) The commissioners court may also provide a suitable courtroom for each justice of the peace.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 291.005. MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES IN COUNTIES WITH POPULATION OF MORE THAN 500,000. (a) The commissioners court of a county with a population of more than 500,000 shall direct and control the employees needed to repair, maintain, and operate the county's courthouses and criminal court buildings.

(b) The commissioners court may designate a building superintendent to employ the personnel. Employments are subject to approval by the commissioners court. An employment must:

- (1) be in writing and signed by the employee; and
- (2) state the nature of the duties to be performed, the period of employment, the hours to be worked, and the amount to be paid.

(c) The employment of a person under this section ends January 1 of each year but may be renewed from year to year. The commissioners court may discharge the employee at any time for cause.

(d) The number of employees appointed under this section is subject to the approval of the county auditor.

(e) Regardless of Subsections (a)-(d), the sheriff is responsible for employing and discharging, as provided by other law, the employees engaged in the operation of county jails. The employees necessary for the proper conduct of the jails or the safekeeping of prisoners are under the exclusive direction and control of the sheriff.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 291.006. PRIVATE BUSINESS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY. (a) A county official or an agent, deputy, or employee of a county official may not operate a private business on public property unless the person:

- (1) keeps an accurate and detailed record of money that the person receives and disburses;
- (2) files with the county auditor or other county

auditing authority, on or before January 1 of each year, a report of receipts and disbursements during the previous calendar year; and

(3) makes available to the county auditor all records of the receipts and disbursements.

(b) An amount of money equal to the amount of receipts required to be reported plus any interest paid by a financial institution on deposits of this money, less the amount of disbursements required to be reported, shall be delivered to the county treasurer when the report required by Subsection (a) is filed or in installments at regular intervals during the year as may be prescribed by the county auditor or other county auditing authority. This subsection does not apply to a person acting under or by virtue of a written contract with the county.

(c) If a county official has not complied with this section by February 1 of each year, the county auditor shall notify the county or district attorney of the violation. The county or district attorney shall, and any qualified voter of the county may, file a petition in a district court of the county for a writ of mandamus to compel compliance.

(d) A person who violates this section or falsifies a record or report required by this section commits official misconduct and may be removed under Chapter 87.

(e) This section does not apply to compensation that a justice of the peace or official court reporter receives for performing an act not required by law.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 291.007. NONBINDING REFERENDUM ON COUNTY PROPERTY MATTER. The commissioners court of a county with a population of less than 40,000 may order a nonbinding referendum in the county on any matter affecting county property. The referendum must be held on an authorized uniform election date as provided by Chapter 41, Election Code.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 368, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 30, 1993.

Sec. 291.008. FEE FOR SECURITY. (a) The commissioners court may set a fee not to exceed \$5 to be collected at the time of

filing in each civil case filed in a county court, county court at law, or district court which shall be taxed as other costs. The county is not liable for the costs.

(b) In any civil case brought by the state or a political subdivision of the state in a county court, county court at law, or district court in a county in which the commissioners court has adopted a fee under Subsection (a) of this section in which the state or political subdivision is the prevailing party, the amount of that fee shall be taxed and collected as a cost of court against each nonprevailing party.

(c) The clerks of the respective courts shall collect the costs established by Subsections (a) and (b) of this section.

(d) If a commissioners court sets a security fee under Subsection (a) of this section, the county and district clerks shall collect a fee of \$1 for filing any document not subject to the security fee. The county is not liable for the costs. The county or district clerk, as appropriate, shall collect this fee.

(e) Costs and fees collected under Subsection (c) or (d) of this section shall be paid to the county treasurer, or to any other official who discharges the duties commonly delegated to the county treasurer, for deposit in the courthouse security fund established by Article [102.017](#), Code of Criminal Procedure.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 818, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.  
Renumbered from Local Government Code Sec. 291.007 by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 17.01(41), eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 291.009. WEBB COUNTY SECURITY FEE. (a) In addition to any other fee authorized by law, including a fee for security under Section [291.008](#), the Webb County Commissioners Court may set a fee not to exceed \$20 to be collected at the time of filing in each civil case filed in the county court, a county court at law, or a district court in Webb County. The fee shall be taxed as other costs. The county is not liable for the costs.

(b) In any civil case brought by the state or a political subdivision of the state in which the state or political subdivision is the prevailing party, the amount of a fee imposed under Subsection (a) shall be taxed and collected as a cost of court

against each nonprevailing party.

(c) The clerks of the respective courts shall collect the costs under Subsections (a) and (b).

(d) Costs and fees collected under this section shall be paid to the county treasurer, or to any other official who discharges the duties commonly delegated to the county treasurer, for deposit in a special fund to be used by the commissioners court only for courthouse security.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 465, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1101, Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2001.

Sec. 291.010. SECURITY SERVICES IDENTIFICATION CARD.

(a) The commissioners court of a county by order may:

(1) authorize the issuance of an identification card to individuals permitting entrance into a county building that houses a justice court, county court, county court at law, or district court without passing through the security services provided under Article 102.017, Code of Criminal Procedure; and

(2) set a reasonable fee for the issuance of the identification card to individuals other than county employees.

(b) The commissioners court shall adopt standards for issuing an identification card described by this section to ensure public safety and security.

(c) This section does not authorize a person to possess a firearm, as that term is defined by Section 46.01, Penal Code, in a county building that houses a justice court, county court, county court at law, or district court. A person who possesses a firearm in any court described by this section or in any office used by the court without the court's written authorization or without complying with any written regulation of the court is subject to the penalties provided by Chapter 46, Penal Code.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 754, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 30, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 827 (H.B. 3003), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 291.011. ADVERTISING INSIDE CERTAIN COUNTY FACILITIES.

(a) The commissioners court of a county may enter into an agreement with a public or private entity for a digital message display system to promote county information or news items of general interest in:

(1) a publicly accessible area of the office of the tax assessor-collector or a branch office established under Section [292.025](#), [292.026](#), or [292.027](#) for which a deputy assessor-collector has been appointed; or

(2) a jury assembly room.

(b) For the purpose of funding a digital message display system, a portion of the information displayed on the system may consist of digital advertisements. The commissioners court may review and has the right to reject any proposed advertising to be displayed on a system.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 485 (H.B. [1542](#)), Sec. 3, eff. June 16, 2015.